

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Charleston, South Carolina

Profile of Drug Indicators

August 2002



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Charleston, South Carolina

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, funding, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- Charleston city population: 96,650 (2000 Census)
- Race/Ethnicity: 63.67% white, 34.33% black or African American, 0.15% American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.25% Asian, 0.06% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 0.54% Some other race, 0.95% two or more races, 1.53% Hispanic
- The city of Charleston is located in Berkeley and Charleston County.

Politics

- Mayor: Joe Riley²
- Council Members (Districts 1-12, respectively): Henry B. Fishburne; Deborah Morinelli; James Lewis, Jr.; Kwadjo Campbell; Jimmy S. Gallant; Wendell G. Gilliard; Lewis Waring; Yvonne D. Evans; Paul Tinkler; Larry D. Shirley; Anne Frances Bleecker; G. Robert George.³
- Charleston Chief of Police: Reuben M. Greenberg⁴

Programs/Initiatives

- Public Housing Crime Prevention Unit-Charleston Police Department⁵
In January 1984, a full time uniformed police sergeant was assigned to the Charleston Housing Authority. The sergeant coordinated police services and maintained liaisons between residents, managers, and various public services. In the first four years (1984-1988) of this program, both violent and non-violent crimes were reduced by 40 percent. By 1998, there were a total of four officers working in the public housing crime prevention unit.

Funding

- Charleston Weed and Seed⁶
The Weed and Seed target area is on the upper Peninsula of the city which contains the city's central business district and historical district, and is composed of nine census tracts, including seven residential neighborhoods, public and private low income housing. Weed and Seed patrol and narcotics officers work with the U.S. Attorney's Violent Crime Task Force to reduce crime in the target area. Effective enforcement measures ranging from high visibility foot patrols to saturation and surveillance are utilized to identify and apprehend criminals.
- FY 2001 SAMHSA Discretionary Funds received in Charleston: ⁷
 - Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)
 - Grantee: Medical University of South Carolina; Program: Community Treatment Program; FY 2001 Spending: \$500,000; Program Period: 9/30/2001 – 9/29/2004

- FY 2002 Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities⁸
 - Berkeley County
 - The Ernest E. Kennedy Center received \$31,392 to employ a prevention outreach specialist.
 - Charleston County
 - The Charleston Center received \$41,329 to provide risk-reduction services for students of Septima P. Clark Corporate Academy, which is a Community in Schools drop out prevention program.
 - The Charleston Center's Children of Alcoholic Families program received \$45,328 to provide risk-reduction services for families who have been affected by drug and/or alcohol addiction.
 - The Charleston Communities In Schools received \$45,252 to maintain the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- According to the Charleston Police Department during 2001, there were 876 arrests for drug abuse violations in the city of Charleston.⁹

Number of Offenses Known to Law Enforcement, Charleston, 2001

Offense	2001
Murder	5
Rape	12
Robbery	110
Aggravated assault	175
Burglary	146
Larceny	662
Motor vehicle theft	29
Arson	2
Drug Abuse Violations	876
DUI	148
Liquor Laws Violation	45
Drunkenness	114
Total	2,324

- There were 4,728 total drug abuse violation arrests in the Charleston Metropolitan area during 2000.¹⁰

Drug-Related Arrest, Charleston Metropolitan Area, 2000

	Drug Abuse Violations	Drug Paraphernalia Violations
Berkeley County	916	14
Charleston County	3,248	541
Dorchester County	564	25
Charleston Total	4,728	580

- During 2000 in the Charleston Metropolitan Area, there were 1,124 drug abuse violation arrests for crack.¹¹

Type of Drug Violation Arrest, Charleston Metropolitan Area, 2000

Crack	1,124
Cocaine	280
Hashish	2
Heroin	59
Marijuana	3,191
Morphine	0
Other Narcotics	2
LSD	11
Other Hallucinogens	4
Amphetamines	20
Other Stimulants	1
Other Depressants	4
Other Drugs	19
Unknown Types	11
Total	4,728

- The Charleston area is one of three main cities in South Carolina with the largest number of gangs in the state. These gangs are mostly involved in drug distribution. The Insane Gangster Disciples have a significant presence in Charleston and members have been involved in assaults, homicides, home invasions, and weapon distributions. Other violent gangs in Charleston include the Mafia Gangster Disciples and the South Side Piru Bloods. Both of these gangs have been involved in assaults on law enforcement officers, driveby shooting, car jacking, home invasions, homicides and weapons distribution.¹²

Drugs¹³

- Heroin abuse and distribution are concentrated in the Charleston Low Country area. During 1999 and 2000, a high purity form of heroin (as pure as 90%) was available in Charleston, and caused many overdoses. During a 1-week period, 15 heroin overdose deaths occurred in Charleston. Heroin prices range from \$300 for a gram, to \$3,500-\$8,000 for an ounce, to \$125,000 for a kilogram.
- Methamphetamine prices range from \$85 for a gram, to \$900-\$1,500 for an ounce, to \$15,000 for a pound, to \$17,000-\$19,000 for a kilogram.

Juveniles

- There were 2,744 juvenile drug abuse violation arrests during 2000 in Charleston County.¹⁴

- There were 3,980 juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations in the Charleston Metropolitan Area during 2000.¹⁵

Juvenile Drug-Related Arrests, Charleston Metropolitan Area, 2000

	Drug Abuse Violations	Drug Paraphernalia Violations
Berkeley County	770	12
Charleston County	2,744	528
Dorchester County	466	25
Charleston Total	3,980	565

Enforcement

- As of October 2000, there were 479 law enforcement personnel working in Charleston, 347 of which were officers.¹⁶

Trafficking and Seizures¹⁷

- The seaport of Charleston is a susceptible target for international drug trafficking. It is the seventh busiest seaport in the country for container traffic. Charleston is the transshipment point for drugs destined for the Southeast, MidAtlantic, Northeast, as well as the rest of South Carolina.
- In June 2000, the U.S. Customs Service seized 55.5 kilograms of cocaine, worth an estimated \$1.1 million, during an inspection of a container ship at the Port in Charleston.
- In November 2000, a shipment of almost 3,000 pounds of marijuana, worth \$1.2 million, was smuggled through the Charleston Port and seized in North Carolina.
- Dominican criminal groups and local African American dealers and street gangs transport South American, Southeast Asian, and Southwest Asian white powdered heroin into Charleston and distribute the drug. Mexican criminal groups transport Mexican brown powdered and Mexican black tar heroin into the Charleston area.
- In 2000, a medical student in Charleston received 500 milligrams of GHB from a relative in Iowa. Upon arrest, the medical student informed police that he was intending on treating two women who suffer from illness and depression.
- During 2000 in Charleston, two brothers sold “date rape” drug kits, disguised as computer cleaning solvents, on their Web site. The kits contained enough GBL and sodium hydroxide to make 15 to 20 doses of GHB. Police seized 55-gallon drums of GBL and 10 pounds of sodium hydroxide from the brother’s home.
- In 1999, local DEA agents seized 3 MDMA labs in Charleston County.

Courts

- As of January 2002, there were two drug courts operating for over 2 years and one drug court being planned in Charleston.¹⁸

Treatment

- As of July 2002, there were 1,713 drug treatment admission in Charleston.¹⁹

Drug Treatment Admissions, Charleston, July 2002

	All Drugs	Marijuana	Cocaine-Crack	Other Drugs
Berkeley	343	218	97	28
Charleston	1,084	408	479	197
Total	1,427	626	576	225

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

² City of Charleston Web site: <http://www.ci.charleston.sc.us>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Charleston Police Department Web site: <http://www.charleston-pd.org>

⁵ Charleston Police Department Web site, Public Housing Crime Prevention Unit:
<http://www.charleston-pd.org/cpdphcpu.html>

⁶ Weed and Seed Program Web site, Charleston, South Carolina: <http://www.weedseed.org/site.asp>

⁷ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, FY 2001 Formula and Discretionary Grant allotments, South Carolina: <http://www.samhsa.gov/funding/content/states01/State.htm>

⁸ South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Services, The BIG Issue, March-August 2001:
http://www.daodas.state.sc.us/web/bigissue/bi03_01/3.html

⁹ City of Charleston Police Department, Crime Statistics: Arrests from January to December 2001

¹⁰ South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, Drug Related Arrest Data, 1998-2000

¹¹ South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, Type of Drug Violation Arrest, 2000

¹² National Drug Intelligence Center, *South Carolina Drug Threat Assessment*, December 2001:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs/717/717p.pdf>

¹³ National Drug Intelligence Center, *South Carolina Drug Threat Assessment*, December 2001:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs/717/717p.pdf>

¹⁴ South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, Drug Related Arrest Data, 1998-2000

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, *Crime in the United States, 2000*, October 2001: <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>

¹⁷ National Drug Intelligence Center, *South Carolina Drug Threat Assessment*, December 2001:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs/717/717p.pdf>

¹⁸ OJP Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project, *Summary of Drug Court Activity by State and County*, January 17, 2002:
<http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/spa/justice/publications/drgchart2k.pdf>

¹⁹ South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, Drug Treatment Admissions, FY 2002

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